National Forest Policy

3820. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the inspite of a specfific mandate of the National Forest Policy of 1952 and 1988 that forests should occupy 33 per cent of total land area of the country, barely 12% per cent of the geographical area of the country had a forest canopy cover of 40 percent density;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the allocation of this forestry sector for the Eighth Five Year Plan stood at Rs. 4082.00 crores which was not more than 0.94 per cent of the total allocations and showed perceptible declined when compared with percentage allocation made in Seventh Five Year Plan;

(c) whether foreign donor agencies have found that due to inadequate funding by Government of India the externally aided forestry projects had failed to make the progress as laid down in Approved Projects-Documents; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons therefor and what remedial measures Government of India have taken to preserve forest conservation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) As per the state of Forest Report of 1993, 11.73 per cent of the country's geographical area is in the category of Dense Forest with crown density above 40 per cent.

(b) Yes, Sir. The allocation in the Forestry and Wildlife sector as a percentage of the total public sector outlay during the Seventh Five Year Plan was 1.03 per cent. However, in absolute terms the allocation in the sector increased from Rs. 1859 crore to Rs. 4082 crore.

(c) and (d) In view of satisfactory progress in the implementation of plantation programmes in the country foreign donor agencies are taking increasing interest in funding for forestry projects. As regards increasing allocations in the forestry sector, State Governments are being continuously persuaded to provide higher funds for forestry development in consultation with the Planning Commission.

Ganga Cleaning Project

3821. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress made on the Ganga Cleaning Project·

(b) what is the total amount so far spent on the project;

(c) how soon, Government expect to complete the balance planned work;

(d) whether it is a fact that large amount spent on the project has not been properly used; and

(e) whether Government will appoint Expert Committee to go into the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Out of 261 schemes under Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, 237 schemes have been completed.

(b) An amount of Rs. 401.09 crores has so far been released under Ganga Action Plan Phase—I.

(c) The remaining schemes of Ganga Action Plan Phase-I are expected to be completed by 31.3.1996.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Progress of Ganga Action Plan is reviewed regularly by the Central Ganga Authority and several committees under it. The Government has decided to have an independent evaluation carried out by an outside agency.

Allotment of Forest Land for its Development

3822. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI:
SHRI RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the general policy and criteria for allotment of forest land to the private parties for its development;